

Description

OPTICAL TRANSMITTER FOR INCREASED EFFECTIVE MODAL BANDWIDTH TRANSMISSION

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This patent application claims priority to U.S. provisional patent application Serial No. 60/481,166, filed on August 1, 2003, and entitled "Optical Fiber Transmission System with Increased Effective Modal Bandwidth," the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0002] Many existing optical fiber transmission systems use multi-mode optical fiber. Multi-mode optical fiber is widely used because it is relatively inexpensive, easy to install and because it is suitable for use with low cost transmitter and receiver components. The relatively large optical fiber core and numerical aperture of multi-mode optical fibers allows more light to be launched into the

optical fiber, as compared to single-mode optical fibers. Therefore, such systems can use lower power and lower cost optical sources. For these reasons, local area networks have employed multi-mode optical fiber for many years. Some data communication systems, such as Fiber Data Distribution Interface (FDDI) systems are specifically designed to use multi-mode optical fiber. Known multi-mode optical fiber transmission systems, however, have relatively low bandwidth-distance products for a given bit error rate (BER) and, therefore, are not suitable for many state-of-the art communication systems.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

- [0003] This invention is described with particularity in the detailed description. The above and further advantages of this invention may be better understood by referring to the following description in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like numerals indicate like structural elements and features in various figures. The drawings are not necessarily to scale, emphasis instead being placed upon illustrating the principles of the invention.
- [0004] FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of a multi-mode optical fiber transmission system that includes two spatial mode

optical filters according to the present invention.

[0005] FIG. 2 illustrates a block diagram of a single-mode optical fiber transmission system that includes a spatial mode optical filter according to the present invention.

[0006] FIG. 3 illustrates a block diagram of an optical transmitter that includes an electro-absorption modulator according to the present invention that generates optical signals with improved or optimal spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through an optical fiber link.

[0007] FIG. 4 illustrates a block diagram of an optical transmitter that includes an electro-absorption modulated laser (EML) according to the present invention that generates optical signals with improved or optimal spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through an optical fiber link.

[0008] FIG. 5 illustrates a block diagram of an optical transmitter that includes an embodiment of a laser modulator according to the present invention that generates optical signals with improved or optimal spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through an optical fiber link.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0009] The present invention relates to methods and apparatus for increasing the effective modal bandwidth of optical fiber transmission systems. The term "effective modal

"bandwidth" is defined herein to mean the bandwidth-distance product of the transmission system for a given Bit Error Rate (BER) and/or a certain transmission specification. Increasing the effective modal bandwidth of a multi-mode optical fiber transmission system will allow providers to increase the data rate and will extend the useful service life of many installed multi-mode optical fiber transmission systems.

- [0010] One aspect of the present invention is embodied in the design of optical transmitters that have improved or optimum spectral and phase characteristics for transmitting data in a multi-mode optical fiber. Another aspect of the present invention is embodied in the use of spatial filtering to reduce the number of modes propagating in a multi-mode optical fiber. These aspects alone or in combination increase the effective modal bandwidth of multi-mode optical fiber transmission systems.
- [0011] FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of a multi-mode optical fiber transmission system 100 that includes two spatial mode optical filters according to the present invention. The transmission system 100 includes an optical transmitter 102, a multi-mode optical fiber link 104, and an optical receiver 106. The optical transmitter 102 gener-

ates optical signals for data transmission through the multi-mode optical fiber link 104.

- [0012] In one embodiment, the optical transmitter 102 includes an intensity modulated optical source, an electro-absorption modulated laser, an integrated laser modulator, or a laser modulator having parameters that generate optical signals with improved or optimal spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through an optical fiber link as described herein. In one embodiment, the optical transmitter 102 includes more than one optical source that generates additional optical signals at different wavelengths. In one embodiment, the optical source includes a WDM optical source that generates a plurality of optical signals and each of the plurality of optical signals has a different wavelength.
- [0013] In some embodiments, the optical transmitter 102 includes additional optical sources that are used to generate additional optical signals that increase the data capacity of the multi-mode optical fiber link 104. In some of these embodiments, the multi-mode optical fiber transmission system 100 includes additional optical transmitters 102 that are used to generate optical signals that propagate in opposite directions in the same multi-mode optical fiber.

Separate optical carriers can be used to minimize cross-talk between optical signals propagating in opposite directions.

- [0014] The optical transmitter 102 is optically coupled to a first single-mode optical fiber 108. Optical signals generated by the optical transmitter 102 propagate down the first single-mode optical fiber 108. A first spatial mode converter 110 is optically coupled to the first single-mode optical fiber 108. The first spatial mode converter 110 reduces the number of modes in the optical signal propagating through the first spatial mode converter 110.
- [0015] The first spatial mode converter 110 can reduce the number of higher-order modes, the number of lower-order modes or both the number of higher-and lower-order modes in the optical signal propagating through the first spatial mode converter 110. By lower-order modes, we mean modes in which most of the energy is localized around the center of the optical fiber core of the multi-mode optical fiber. By higher-order modes, we mean modes in which most of the energy is localized outside of the center of the optical fiber core of the multi-mode optical fiber.
- [0016] An input 112 of the multi-mode optical fiber link 104 is

optically coupled to the first spatial mode converter 110. The multi-mode optical fiber link 104 can include a single length of multi-mode optical fiber or can include multiple lengths of multi-mode optical fiber that are coupled together. The multiple lengths of multi-mode optical fiber can be butt coupled together. For example, the butt couplings can be tapered optical fiber sections or polished optical fiber sections.

- [0017] A second spatial mode converter 116 is optically coupled to an output 114 of the multi-mode optical fiber link 104. The second spatial mode converter 116 is also optically coupled to a second single-mode optical fiber 118. The second spatial mode converter 116 further reduces the number of modes in the optical signal that are transmitted through the second spatial mode converter 116 and, therefore, limits the number of dominant modes that will be received by the optical receiver 106. The second spatial mode converter 116 can reduce the number of higher-order modes, the number of lower-order modes or both the number of higher-and lower-order modes in the optical signal propagating through the second spatial mode converter 116.

- [0018] Both the first 110 and the second spatial mode converters

116 increase the effective modal bandwidth of the multi-mode optical fiber transmission system 100. The first and second spatial mode converters 110, 116 can be any type of spatial mode converter that reduces the number of modes in the optical signal generated by the optical transmitter 102. For example, the first and second spatial mode converters 110, 116 can include a fusion splice or a butt coupling between the multi-mode optical fiber 104 and a respective one of the first 108 and the second single-mode optical fiber 118. The butt coupling can be positioned at a bulkhead. The first and second spatial mode converters 110, 116 can also include a lens imaging system having refractive and diffractive elements.

- [0019] The effective modal bandwidth of the multi-mode optical fiber transmission system 100 according to the present invention including the two spatial mode converters 110, 116 has a relatively high-level of immunity to polarization effects, fiber stress, vibration, and changes in temperature. In particular, there is little or no change in the effective modal bandwidth due to changes in laser polarization or changes in polarization caused by mechanical stress on the multi-mode optical fiber link 104. Also, there is little or no change in the effective modal bandwidth due to

temperature changes in the fiber environment.

[0020] The present invention features a method of increasing effective modal bandwidth of an optical signal transmitted through a multi-mode optical fiber. The method includes generating an optical signal and propagating the optical signal through a single-mode optical fiber. In one embodiment, the optical signal is chosen to reduce phase corruption. The optical signal is then spatially mode converted to an optical signal having a lower number of modes. The spatial mode converting reduces modal dispersion, which increases an effective bandwidth of the optical signal.

[0021] The optical signal having the lower number of modes is then propagated through a multi-mode optical fiber. The optical signal propagating through the multi-mode optical fiber is then spatially mode converted, which further increases the effective bandwidth of the optical signal. The spatial mode conversions can reduce changes in effective modal bandwidth of the optical signal that are caused by physical effects, such as thermal variations in the multi-mode optical fiber, polarization effects in the multi-mode optical fiber, mechanical stress in the multi-mode optical fiber, optical fiber splices in the multi-mode optical fiber,

and optical connector misalignment in the multi-mode optical fiber.

- [0022] Some aspects of the present invention are described in connection with a multi-mode optical fiber link that is typically a local area fiber link. However, the present invention can also be practiced with a single-mode optical fiber link that is typically a long-haul optical fiber link.
- [0023] FIG. 2 illustrates a block diagram of a single-mode optical fiber transmission system 150 that includes a spatial mode optical filter according to the present invention. The transmission system 150 includes an optical transmitter 102, a single-mode optical fiber link 152, and an optical receiver 106. The single-mode optical fiber transmission system 150 is similar to the multi-mode optical fiber transmission system 150 that was described in connection with FIG. 1.
- [0024] The optical transmitter 102 generates optical signals for data transmission through the single-mode optical fiber link 152. In one embodiment, the optical transmitter 102 includes more than one optical source that generates additional optical signals at different wavelengths that increase the data capacity of the single-mode optical fiber link 152. In some embodiments, the single-mode optical

fiber transmission system 100 includes additional optical transmitters 102 that are used to generate optical signals that propagate in opposite directions in the same single-mode optical fiber.

- [0025] The optical transmitter 102 is optically coupled to a first single-mode optical fiber 108. Optical signals generated by the optical transmitter 102 propagate down the first single-mode optical fiber 108. A first spatial mode converter 110 is optically coupled to the first single-mode optical fiber 108. The first spatial mode converter 110 reduces the number of modes in the optical signal propagating through the first spatial mode converter 110.
- [0026] An input 151 of the single-mode optical fiber link 152 is optically coupled to the first spatial mode converter 110. The single-mode optical fiber link 152 can include a single length of single-mode optical fiber or can include multiple lengths of single-mode optical fiber that are fusion spliced or coupled together. An optical coupler 154 is optically coupled to an output 156 of the single-mode optical fiber link 152. The optical coupler 154 is also optically coupled to a second single-mode optical fiber 118.
- [0027] The first spatial mode converter 110 increases the effective modal bandwidth of the single-mode optical fiber

transmission system 150. The effective modal bandwidth of the single-mode optical fiber transmission system 150 according to the present invention including the first spatial mode converter 110 has a relatively high-level of immunity to polarization effects, fiber stress, and changes in temperature.

- [0028] Dispersion can degrade signals in the multi-mode and single-mode optical fiber transmission systems 100, 150 that are described in connection with FIG. 1 and FIG. 2. Several different types of dispersion can occur in these optical fiber transmission systems. For example, chromatic dispersion can occur in WDM optical fiber transmission systems. Chromatic dispersion is caused by differences in the speed at which signals having different wavelengths travel in the optical fiber link. Chromatic dispersion generally decreases the acceptable transmission distance as the square of the bit rate.
- [0029] Polarization mode dispersion (PMD) occurs when the orthogonal polarization components of the optical signal travel at different rates in the optical fiber link. Polarization mode dispersion results from asymmetries in the optical fiber core. Polarization mode dispersion causes a statistical disruption in network operation and, conse-

quently, limits the transmission distance.

- [0030] Signal degradation caused by these dispersions, if uncompensated, corrupts the signal by broadening the pulses in the signal, which causes Inter Symbol Interference (ISI). The ISI will eventually degrade the signal quality enough for the signal to fall below the acceptable threshold for service. Thus, these dispersions can limit the possible transmission distance in the optical fiber links and can cause service interruptions.
- [0031] The multi-mode and single-mode optical fiber transmission systems that are described in connection with FIG. 1 and FIG. 2 can be used in conjunction with any type of dispersion compensation technique. In one embodiment of the present invention, electronic dispersion compensation is used to reconstruct dispersed signals received by the receiver 106. In this embodiment, the receiver 106 includes at least one active filter that is electrically coupled to the output of a detector. There are many different types of active filters known in the art that are suitable for electronic dispersion compensation.
- [0032] For example, the active filter can be a Finite Impulse Response (FIR) filter, such as a Feed Forward Equalizer (FFE) filter. Such filters sample the received signal, after elec-

tro-optic conversion by the detector. Different delayed samples are scaled and then summed once per sample clock. The length of the FIR filter (i.e. the number of taps) is related to the amount of ISI that is incurred during transmission.

- [0033] A Decision Feedback Equalizer (DFE) filter can be used with the FFE filter to further reduce the ISI. The DFE filter takes the decisions from the FFE filter as its input. The output of the DFE is combined with the output of the FFE filter and is fed back to the input of the DFE. The clock and data are then recovered from the dispersion compensated signal. The received data is then demultiplexed.
- [0034] FIG. 3 illustrates a block diagram of an optical transmitter 200 that includes an electro-absorption modulator according to the present invention that generates optical signals with improved or optimal spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through an optical fiber link. The optical transmitter 200 improves the spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through multi-mode optical fiber links, such as the multi-mode optical fiber link that is described in connection with FIG. 1. In addition, the optical transmitter 200 improves the spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through single-

mode optical fiber links, such as long-haul single-mode optical fiber links.

- [0035] The optical transmitter 200 is designed to generate optical signals that have specific characteristics which increase or maximize immunity to variations in the phase of the optical signal received by the optical receiver 106 (FIGs. 1 and 2). One characteristic of the optical signal generated by the optical transmitter 200 is a reduction in time varying phase or sideband information in the transmission spectrum of the optical signal. Another characteristic of the optical signal generated by the optical transmitter 200 is a reduction in the phase information that is required to transmit the data in the optical fiber links 104, 152 (FIGs. 1 and 2).
- [0036] Another characteristic of the optical signal generated by the optical transmitter 200 is a reduction or elimination of mixing that is required at the optical receiver 106 (FIG. 1) to recover the optical signal. Yet another characteristic of the optical signal generated by the optical transmitter 200 is an increase in isolation of optical signals reflected back towards the optical transmitter 102. In one embodiment of the invention, the optical transmitter 200 generates an optical signal with one or any combination of these char-

acteristics. Generating an optical signal with one or more of these characteristics will increase the effective modal bandwidth of the multi-mode optical fiber transmission system 100 (FIG. 1) and the effective modal bandwidth of the single-mode optical fiber transmission system (FIG. 2).

- [0037] One type of optical transmitter that can generate an optical signal with one or any combination of these characteristics is an electro-absorptively (EA) modulated optical transmitter. The optical transmitter 200 illustrated in FIG. 3 is an exemplary EA optical modulated transmitter. Numerous types of EA modulated sources can be used in an optical transmitter according to the present invention. In other embodiments, other types of intensity modulators are used.
- [0038] The optical transmitter 200 includes a laser 202 that generates a continuous wave (CW) optical signal at an output 204. In some embodiments, the laser 202 is a semiconductor diode laser. However, other types of lasers can also be used. The transmitter 200 also includes a laser bias circuit 206. An output 208 of the laser bias circuit 206 is electrically connected to a bias input 210 of the laser 202. The laser bias circuit 206 generates a current at the out-

put 208 that biases the laser 202.

[0039] The optical transmitter 200 also includes an Electro-Absorption Modulator (EAM) 210 that modulates the CW optical signal generated by the laser 202. In some embodiments, the laser 202 and the EAM 210 are separate discrete components. In other embodiments, the laser 202 and the EAM 210 are physically integrated on a single substrate. The EAM 210 includes an optical input 212, a bias and modulation input 214, and an optical output 216. The optical input 212 is positioned in optical communication with the output 204 of the laser 202. A waveguide, such as an optical fiber, can be used to optically couple the output 204 of the laser 202 to the optical input 212 of the EAM 210.

[0040] The optical transmitter 200 including the EAM 210 generates optical signals with improved or optimal spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through a multi-mode optical fiber link. The modulated optical signal that is generated by the optical transmitter 200 including the EAM 210 has very little phase information because EA modulators operate as efficient intensity modulators.

[0041] In one embodiment of the invention, the EAM 210 is specifically designed and fabricated to have at least one

parameter that causes the EAM 210 to modulate intensity so as to suppress phase and sideband information in the transmission spectrum. EA modulators are relatively efficient intensity modulators. Therefore, time varying phase and sideband information in the transmission spectrum is generally suppressed. However, a transmitter according to one embodiment of the invention can be designed, fabricated, and/or operated to further reduce phase and sideband information in the transmission spectrum.

- [0042] There are numerous physical EA modulator parameters that can be adjusted to change the amplitude and phase characteristics of the modulated optical signal in order to suppress phase and sideband information from the transmission spectrum. For example, parameters, such as the extinction ratio or voltage swing of the EA modulator, polarization properties, the 3-dB bandwidth, the facet coating properties, the input third-order intercept (IIP3), and the spurious free dynamic range (SFDR) can be adjusted during design and fabrication to suppress phase and sideband information from the transmission spectrum. Adjusting the extinction ratio of the EA modulator has been shown to suppress phase and sideband information from the transmission spectrum and, consequently, to in-

crease the signal-to-noise ratio of optical signals propagating through multi-mode optical fiber. In one embodiment of the invention, the extinction ratio of the EA modulator 210 is in the range of about five to fifteen.

- [0043] The optimal value of the extinction ratio is a function of the length of the multi-mode optical fiber. The optimal value of the extinction ratio can also be a function of the number of the fiber connectors and the alignment of the fiber connectors in the multi-mode optical fiber link 104 (FIG. 1) and the single mode optical fiber link 152 (FIG. 2). In addition, the optimal value of the extinction ratio can also be a function and many environmental factors, such as the level of the vibration, mechanical strain, thermal shock, and optical power fluctuations in the optical fiber link.
- [0044] In one example, an EA modulator with an extinction ratio of about 11.5 has been shown to transmit optical signals through a 1250 foot multi-mode optical fiber link with relatively low phase and sideband information and relatively high signal-to-noise ratio compared with EA modulators having extinction ratios of about five and about eight in the same optical fiber link under similar environmental conditions. In another example, an EA modulator

with an extinction ratio of about ten has been shown to transmit optical signals through a 4500 foot multi-mode optical fiber link with relatively low phase and sideband information and relatively high signal-to-noise ratio compared with an EA modulator having an extinction ratio of about five in the same optical fiber link under similar environmental conditions.

- [0045] The optical transmitter 200 also includes a bias and data multiplexing circuit 218 that generates the desired electrical bias and data signals for the EAM 210. In some embodiments, the bias and data multiplexing circuit 218 includes two physically separate components. In other embodiments, the bias and data multiplexing circuit 218 is one component as shown in FIG. 3. An output 220 of the bias and data multiplexing circuit 218 is electrically connected to the modulation input 214 of the EAM 210. The EAM 210 modulates the CW optical signal generated by the laser 202 with an electronic data signal generated by the bias and data multiplexing circuit 218. The modulated optical signal propagates from the optical output 216 of the EAM 210.
- [0046] In one embodiment of the invention, the operating conditions of the EAM 210 are chosen so as to suppress phase

and/or sideband information in the transmission spectrum generated by the EAM 210. For example, the operating temperature of the EAM 210 and the bias voltage that is generated by the bias and data multiplexing circuit 218 and applied to the modulation input 214 of the EAM 210 can be adjusted during operation to suppress phase and/or sideband information from the optical signal.

- [0047] In addition, parameters of the laser 202 that generates the optical signal which is modulated by the EAM 210 can be adjusted to suppress phase and/or sideband information from the transmission spectrum. For example, parameters, such as the wavelength and the optical mode structure of the optical signal generated by the laser 202 can be adjusted so as to suppress phase information and/or sideband information from the modulated optical signal.
- [0048] The modulated optical signal that is generated by the optical transmitter 200 including the EAM 210 has certain characteristics in its transmission spectrum that increase the effective modal bandwidth of the optical fiber link. For example, one characteristic of the transmission spectrum is that the optical signal has minimal time varying phase. Another characteristic of the transmission spectrum is that it has minimal sideband information.

- [0049] The modulated optical signal that is generated by the optical transmitter 200 requires essentially no phase information to transmit the data in an optical link, such as the multi-mode optical fiber link 104 (FIG. 1) and the single-mode optical fiber link 152 (FIG. 2). In addition, the modulated optical signal that is generated by the optical transmitter 200 has good isolation from optical signals reflecting back towards the optical transmitter 200.
- [0050] Thus, the optical transmitter 200 improves the spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through multi-mode optical fiber links, such as the multi-mode optical fiber link 104 that is described in connection with FIG. 1. In addition, the optical transmitter 200 improves the spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through single-mode optical fiber links, such as the single-mode optical fiber link 152 that is described in connection with FIG. 2.
- [0051] There are numerous other types of optical transmitters that when designed, fabricated, and operated according to the present invention will generate optical signals with improved or optimal spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through a multi-mode and single-mode optical fiber link. These optical transmitters include electro-

absorption modulated lasers (EMLs), laser modulators, and electro-optic modulators.

[0052] FIG. 4 illustrates a block diagram of an optical transmitter 250 that includes an electro-absorption modulated laser (EML) 252 according to the present invention that generates optical signals with improved or optimal spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through an optical fiber link. The EML 252 includes a laser diode 254 section and an electro-absorption modulator (EAM) 256 section.

[0053] The laser diode 254 section is typically a distributed feed-back (DFB) laser. The EAM 256 is typically a device that includes a semiconductor layer, such as a multi-quantum well semiconductor layer. The semiconductor layer typically has a slightly larger absorption band edge than the photon energy of the light being modulated. The laser diode 254 section is optically coupled to the EAM 256 section. The laser diode 254 section and EAM section 256 are typically integrated onto a single substrate, but can be physically separate devices.

[0054] A laser bias circuit 258 has an output 260 that is electrically coupled to a bias input 262 of the laser diode 254. The laser bias circuit 258 generates a continuous wave (CW) current that drives the laser diode 254, thereby

causing the laser diode 254 to emit substantially monochromatic light of a predetermined wavelength.

- [0055] A modulator bias and data multiplexing circuit 264 has an output 266 that is electrically coupled to a modulation input 268 of the EAM 256. The modulator bias and data multiplexing circuit 264 generates a voltage across the multi-quantum well semiconductor layer that produces a reverse bias modulating electric field across the semiconductor layer of the EAM 256. The reverse bias modulating electric field causes the absorption edge of the semiconductor layer of the EAM 256 to reversibly move to a longer wavelength, which corresponds to a lower absorption edge. The lower absorption edge causes the semiconductor layer of the EAM 256 to absorb the light generated by the laser diode 254 section that propagates through the semiconductor layer of the EAM 256.
- [0056] Reducing the voltage across the multi-quantum well semiconductor layer results in the elimination or reduction of the reverse bias electric field, which causes the semiconductor layer of the EAM 256 to allow light generated by the laser diode 254 to transmit through the semiconductor layer of the EAM 256. Therefore, light emitted from the laser diode 254 that propagates to the EAM 256

is modulated by modulating the voltage across the multi-quantum well semiconductor layer of the EAM 256. The light emitted is modulated between a sufficient reverse bias voltage across the semiconductor layer that causes the layer to be substantially opaque to the light emitted from the laser diode 254, and substantially zero or a sufficiently positive bias voltage that causes the layer to be substantially transparent to the light emitted from the laser diode 254.

- [0057] The resulting modulated light is emitted at an optical output 270 of the EML 252. The optical output 270 is directly coupled to the single-mode optical fiber 108 (FIGs. 1 and 2). The wavelength of the modulated light can be controlled by adjusting the amplitude of the CW current generated by the laser bias circuit 258 and applied to the laser diode 254. The wavelength of the modulated light can also be controlled by adjusting the temperature of the laser diode 254.
- [0058] The EML 252 includes a thermoelectric cooler (TEC) 272 that controls the temperature of the laser diode 254 and the EAM 256. The temperature of the EML 252 can be stabilized by using a thermal sensor 274 and a feedback circuit 276. The thermal sensor 274 is thermally coupled to

the laser diode 254 and is electrically coupled to the feedback circuit 276. The feedback circuit 276 is electrically coupled to the TEC 272. The feedback circuit 276 receives a signal from the thermal sensor 274 that is related to the temperature of the laser diode 254 and generates a signal in response to the temperature. The signal generated by the feedback circuit 276 controls the thermal properties of the TEC 272 to maintain the laser diode 254 at a pre-determined operating temperature (and thus the major portion of spectral energy of the emitted light at the desired wavelength) independent of ambient temperature.

- [0059] In one embodiment of the invention, the EML 252 is specifically designed and fabricated to have at least one parameter that causes the EML 252 to generate a transmission spectrum with suppressed phase and sideband information. There are numerous physical EML parameters that can be adjusted to change the amplitude and phase characteristics of the modulated optical signal in order to suppress phase and sideband information from the transmission spectrum.
- [0060] For example, parameters of the EAM 256, such as the extinction ratio, the polarization properties, the 3-dB bandwidth, the modulator chirp, the optical mode structure,

the input third-order intercept (IIP3), the spurious free dynamic range (SFDR), and the output facet coating properties can be adjusted during design and fabrication to suppress phase and/or sideband information from the transmission spectrum.

- [0061] Also, parameters of the laser diode 254, such as the wavelength, the optical mode structure, and the parameters of the output facet coating can be adjusted during design and fabrication to suppress phase and/or sideband information from the transmission spectrum. In addition, parameters specific to EML devices, such as the electrical isolation and the optical coupling between the laser diode 254 and the EAM 256 can be adjusted during design and fabrication to suppress phase and/or sideband information from the transmission spectrum.
- [0062] In one embodiment of the invention, the operating conditions of the EML 252 are chosen so as to suppress phase and/or sideband information in the transmission spectrum. For example, operating conditions, such as the current generated by the laser bias circuit 258 and the resulting optical power received by the EAM 256, the bias voltage swing that is generated by the bias and data multiplexing circuit 264 and received by the EAM 256, and

the operating temperature of the laser diode 254 and the EAM 256 can be adjusted during operation of the EML 252 to suppress phase and/or sideband information in the transmission spectrum.

[0063] The present invention can also be practiced with numerous types of laser modulators. FIG. 5 illustrates a block diagram of an optical transmitter 300 that includes an embodiment of a laser modulator 302 according to the present invention that generates optical signals with improved or optimal spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through an optical fiber link. The optical transmitter 300 includes a laser section 304 and a modulator section 306.

[0064] The laser section 304 of the laser modulator 302 shown in FIG. 5 is a tunable three section Distributed Bragg Reflector (DBR) laser. In other embodiments (not shown) a single section DFB laser can be used if wavelength tuning is not desirable. The laser section 304 includes a gain section 308, a phase section 310, and a grating section 312 that are butted together. The gain section 308 generates an optical signal. The phase section 310 introduces an optical phase shift to tune the laser wavelength. The grating section 312 forms a DBR mirror.

[0065] A high reflection coating 314 is deposited on one side of the gain section 308. A laser cavity is formed between the high reflection coating 314 and the DBR mirror formed by the grating section 312. The optical transmitter 300 includes a laser bias circuit 316 having an output 318 that is electrically connected to a bias input 320 of the gain section 308. The laser bias circuit 316 generates a current at the output 318 that biases the gain section 308 to emit the desired optical signal. The design and operation of such lasers are well known in the art.

[0066] The modulator section 306 of the laser modulator 302 is positioned outside of the laser cavity beyond the DBR mirror in the grating section 312. Forming the modulator section 306 external to the laser cavity introduces relatively low wavelength chirp into the modulated optical signal. An input 328 of the modulator section 306 is optically coupled to the grating section 312. An output facet 330 of the modulator section 306 transmits the modulated optical signal. An anti-reflection coating 332 is deposited on the output facet 330 of the modulator section 306 to prevent undesired reflection from entering the laser cavity.

[0067] A modulator bias and data multiplexing circuit 322 has an

output 324 that is electrically coupled to a modulation input 326 of the modulator section 306. The modulator section 306 is an intensity modulator that modulates a CW optical signal that is generated by the laser section 304 with the data generated by the modulator bias and data multiplexing circuit 322. The modulated optical signal is transmitted through the output facet 330 of the modulator section 306 and the anti-reflection coating 332.

- [0068] Many different types of modulator sections 306 can be used with an optical transmitter 300. For example, the modulator section 306 can be a Franz-Keldysh-type electro-absorption modulator section. Such a modulator section 306 includes a section of waveguide with an active region of bulk semiconductor heterostructure material having a slightly larger bandgap energy than the photon energy of the optical signal being modulated. When the modulator bias and data multiplexing circuit 322 applies a reverse bias field to the modulation input 326 of the modulator section 306, the absorption edge is lowered, thus reducing the light emitted.

- [0069] The modulator section 306 can also be a modulated amplifier-type modulator. Such a modulator includes a gain section that can be formed of the same material as the

gain section 308 in the laser cavity. Modulated amplifier-type modulators can achieve relatively broad optical bandwidth. In addition, the modulator section 306 can be a guide/antiguide-type modulator. Guide/antiguide modulators use refractive index effects to achieve intensity modulation. However, unlike other devices that use refractive index effects, such as Mach-Zehnder type modulators, these modulators do not generate large amounts of phase and sideband information in the transmission spectrum because they do not use interference effects.

- [0070] In one embodiment of the invention, the optical transmitter 300 is specifically designed and fabricated to have at least one parameter that causes the optical transmitter 300 to generate a transmission spectrum with suppressed phase and sideband information. There are numerous physical parameters of the laser section 304 and the modulator section 306 that can be adjusted to change the amplitude and phase characteristics of the modulated optical signal in order to suppress phase and sideband information from the transmission spectrum.
- [0071] For example, parameters of the laser section 304, such as the wavelength, the optical mode structure, and the parameters of the output facet coating can be adjusted dur-

ing design and fabrication to suppress phase and/or sideband information from the transmission spectrum. In addition, parameters specific to DBR and DFB laser devices, such as the grating parameters and the properties of the waveguides in the gain section 308, the phase section 310, and the grating section 312, as well as the coupling parameters between these sections, can be adjusted during design and fabrication to suppress phase and/or sideband information from the transmission spectrum.

- [0072] Also, parameters of the modulator section 306, such as the extinction ratio, the polarization properties, the 3-dB bandwidth, the modulator chirp, the optical mode structure, the input third-order intercept (IIP3), the spurious free dynamic range (SFDR), the lateral index guide and antiguide profiles (for guide/antiguide-type modulators), and the output facet coating properties can be adjusted during design and fabrication to suppress phase and/or sideband information from the transmission spectrum.
- [0073] In one embodiment of the invention, the operating conditions of the optical transmitter 300 are chosen so as to suppress phase and/or sideband information in the transmission spectrum. For example, the current generated by the laser bias circuit 316 and the resulting optical power

received by the modulator section 306, the bias voltage that is generated by the bias and data multiplexing circuit 322 and received by the modulator section 306, and the operating temperature of the laser section 304 and the modulator section 306 can be adjusted during operation to suppress phase and/or sideband information from the transmission spectrum.

- [0074] The optical transmitters described herein that generate optical signals with improved or optimal spectral and phase characteristics for transmission through an optical fiber link can be used for transmitting 10GEthernet data in multi-mode optical fiber transmission systems greater than 300 meters long. Error free transmission of optical signals having a 1310nm wavelength over 300 meters of multi-mode optical fiber using such optical transmitters has been demonstrated.

EQUIVALENTS

- [0075] While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to specific preferred embodiments, it should be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

[0076] **What is claimed is:**